

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A system, functionally associated with a plurality of client nodes, comprising:

one or more processors that provide:

an instant messaging server for supporting instant messages between the plurality of client nodes;

a second server for supporting video conferences between the plurality of client nodes; and

a video conference allocator for setting up and managing video conferences on the second server, wherein the video conference allocator is configured to:

receive a request, from [[a]] one of the plurality of client nodes via the instant messaging server, for a video conference, wherein the request is received over a first communication channel opened between the video conference allocator and the instant messaging server, and wherein the request invites one or more of the plurality of client nodes;

in response to receiving the request, determine conference information for the client node and the one or more invited client nodes of the plurality of client nodes, wherein the determined conference information includes a communication mode associated with each of the one or more invited client nodes of the plurality of client nodes;

initiate the video conference by transmitting the determined conference information to the second server over a second communication channel between the video conference allocator and the second server; and

communicate to the one or more invited client nodes of the plurality of client nodes, via the first communication channel opened between the video conference allocator and the instant messaging server, an instant message to join the video conference, wherein the communication mode is embedded in the instant message such that each of the invited client nodes of the plurality of client nodes is automatically configured to join the video conference using the instant message.

2. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via the public switched telephone network (PSTN).

3. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via cellular communication.

4. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via a computer.

5. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via a network gateway.

6. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via a video conferencing standard protocol.

7. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via an ISDN standard protocol.

8. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via an ATM standard protocol.

9. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the instant messaging server contains information related to communication modes of the client nodes used to participate in the video conference.

10. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via the public switched telephone network (PSTN).

11. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the communication modes comprise cellular communication.

12. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via a computer.

13. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via a gateway.

14. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via a video conferencing standard protocol.

15. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via an ISDN standard protocol.

16. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via an ATM standard protocol.

17. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, further comprising a database communicatively coupled to said instant messaging server for storing information related to the client nodes used to initiate the video conference.

18. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 17, wherein the database receives the information from the instant messaging server.

19. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 17, wherein the information is related to communication modes of the client nodes used to participate in the video conference.

20. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 19, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via the public switched telephone network (PSTN).

21. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 19, wherein the communication modes comprise cellular communication.

22. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 19, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via a computer.

23. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 19, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via a gateway.

24. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 19, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via a video conferencing standard protocol.

25. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 19, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via an ISDN standard protocol.

26. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 19, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via an ATM standard protocol.

27. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the second server is a network video conferencing server which supports video conferences using a network video conferencing protocol.

28. (Currently Amended) A communication method, comprising:

- providing an instant messaging server for supporting instant messages between the plurality of client nodes;
- providing a second server for supporting video conferences between the plurality of client nodes; and
- providing a video conference allocator for setting up and managing video conferences on the second server, wherein the video conference allocator:
  - receives a request, from [[a]] one of the plurality of client nodes via the instant messaging server, for a video conference, wherein the request is received over a first communication channel opened between the video conference allocator and the instant messaging server, and wherein the request invites one or more of the plurality of client nodes;
  - in response to receiving the request, determines conference information for the client node and the one or more invited client nodes of the plurality of client nodes, wherein the determined conference information includes a communication mode associated with each of the one or more invited client nodes of the plurality of client nodes;
  - initiates the video conference by transmitting the determined conference information to the second server over a second communication channel between the video conference allocator and the second server; and
  - communicates to the one or more invited client nodes of the plurality

of client nodes, via the first communication channel opened between the video conference allocator and the instant messaging server, an instant message to join the video conference, wherein the communication mode is embedded in the instant message such that each of the invited client nodes of the plurality of client nodes is automatically configured to join the video conference using the instant message.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via the public switched telephone network (PSTN).

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via cellular communication.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via a computer.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via a network gateway.

33. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via a video conferencing standard protocol.

34. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via an ISDN standard protocol.

35. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, wherein at least one of the plurality of client nodes participates in the video conference via an ATM standard protocol.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the instant messaging server contains information related to communication modes of the client nodes used to participate in the video conference.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via the public switched telephone network (PSTN).

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein the communication modes comprise cellular communication.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via a computer.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via a gateway.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via a video conferencing standard protocol.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via an ISDN standard protocol.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via an ATM standard protocol.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28, further comprising communicatively coupling a database to said instant messaging server for storing information related to the client nodes used to initiate the video conference.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44, wherein the database receives the information from the instant messaging server.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44, wherein the information is related to communication modes of the client nodes to be used to participate in the video conference.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via the public switched telephone network (PSTN).

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46, wherein the communication modes comprise cellular communication.

49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via a computer.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via a gateway.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via a video conferencing standard protocol.

52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via an ISDN standard protocol.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46, wherein the communication modes comprise communication via an ATM standard protocol.

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the second server is a network video conferencing server which supports video conferences using a network video conferencing protocol.

55. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the instant messaging server provides presence information of each client node regarding its capability to receive instant messages in an instant messaging list, and wherein the video conference allocator is further configured to instruct the instant messaging server to provide a presence indicator for the video conference in the instant messaging list over the first communication channel.

56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the instant messaging server provides presence information of each client node regarding its capability to receive instant messages in an instant messaging list, and wherein the video conference allocator instructs the instant messaging server to provide a presence indicator for the video conference in the instant messaging list over the first communication channel.